CITY OF TORONTO
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Policy
August 2, 1984

To: Land Use Committee

Subject: "Economic Policies for Retail Strips" - Final Recommendations for Official Plan Amendments

Origin: Land Use Committee, October 19, 1983 (c71luc84284:44)

1. Background:

The Land Use Committee heard deputations on my report Public Comment Received about "Economic Policies for Retail Strips" and Proposals for Official Plan Amendments (September 8, 1983) at its meeting of October 19, 1983. The Committee adopted the recommendation that I be requested to report back on the public comments received about the report and to make final recommendations about its proposals.

2. Public Comments

The September, 1983, report elicited relatively few comments from the public in comparison to the original discussion paper, Economic Policies for Retail Strips. This is not surprising since the Official Plan amendments it proposed were substantially the same as the suggestions made in Economic Policies for Retail Strips. The public commented extensively on the original report, and justifiably saw little need to repeat their remarks a few months later.

A letter received from Aldo Violi, President of the Westclair Business and Professional Association, is attached (Appendix A). The Association supports the principle of encouraging "efficient and well run business associations", projects to beautify streetscapes and improve the adequacy of municipal parking, and limits on the size of commercial development. Mr. Violi suggests that a City official be appointed to represent and advise the City's business associations. Mr. Bob Durrant of my staff performs this function in his role as Business Improvement Area Co-ordinator. Assistants hired under the COED Programme have enabled him to expand the services he can offer business associations this year.

Mr. John Bryan of the Toronto Redevelopment Advisory Committee made a deputation at the October 19, 1983, Land Use Committee meeting. He supports the proposals with the exception that he feels that we should require traditional shopping streets, the areas to be given priority in the revitalization programme, to

form Business Improvement Areas. This suggestion is being considered. Traditional shopping streets will be the subject of a further report later this year.

3. Part I Official Plan Amendments

3.1 Introduction

Economic Policies for Retail Strips suggested that two statements be added to the Part I Official Plan to establish the revitalization strategy as City policy. These would join the following four statements Council adopted as Official Plan amendments on September 15, 1980:

1) It is the policy of Council to support retail strips, and initiate public actions and promote private initiatives that will encourage their continued role as major elements in Toronto's commercial land use pattern and centres of activity for its residential neighbourhoods.

2) It is the policy of Council to recognize specific Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas as traditional shopping streets through statements in Part II of this Plan or through other statements of policy. It is the objective of Council that traditional shopping streets be retained as active and economically viable shopping districts. Accordingly, Council will give priority to these districts in determining specific economic and other measures intended to revitalize commercial areas.

3) It is the policy of Council to encourage improvements in the general appearance, the level of maintenance, and the provision of public amenities in Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas. Accordingly, Council will support the undertaking of programmes and other actions which include, but are not limited to, the provision of street furniture and landscaping and the encouragement of the renovation and upgrading of buildings.

4) It is the policy of Council to encourage the development of housing in Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas of a type, density and form that is consistent with the character of the area and compatible with adjacent uses. In accordance with Sections 2A.1, 2A.2 and 2A.13 of this Plan, it is the policy of Council to give particular encouragement to the production of rental accommodation, and of dwelling units suited to the needs of low-to-moderate income households, senior citizens and the handicapped.

These statements have not been drafted in By-law form by the City Solicitor because Section 3 of the Plan is in the process of being substantially reorganized, and it was not clear where the new policies should be placed. A report is in the final stages of preparation that will resolve the organizational issue. It will recommend that the first statement adopted in 1980 become Section 3.1(f) of the Plan and the fourth statement Section 3.1(i). The third statement is to be Section 8A.12 in the new section of the Plan on Community Improvement policies. The second statement pertains to Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas, and therefore is most appropriately included in Section 3A.1 of the Plan. I recommend that it be drafted as Section 3A.1(k).

3.2 Definition of Traditional Shopping Streets

My report of September 8, 1983, proposed that the term "traditional shopping street" be defined in the Plan. The following definition is recommended:

> 10.42 The term traditional shopping streets means those Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas that City Council has identified as active and economically viable shopping districts in accordance with Section 3A.1(k) of this Plan.

The following three general criteria are to be considered in identifying traditional shopping streets:

- street-related retail and service uses should predominate at grade;
- there should be a sufficient market to sustain the area's retail and service activity; and
- there should be public and private investment in the area and an active business association.

If any of these conditions do not exist in a traditional shopping street, there should be an active programme in place to encourage their development as set out in Section 3.3 of this report.

Traditional shopping streets are to be recognized in Part II of the Plan or through other statements of policy. A forthcoming report will refine the criteria to be used in selecting traditional shopping streets, and will propose an initial list of areas for adoption as City policy. The list and criteria will first be distributed to business and resident associations, affected property owners, and various other interest groups active in the City for comment. New traditional shopping streets may be

added to the list from time to time as the City's economic revitalization programme proceeds, or if conditions in an area change.

3.3 Policies in "Traditional Shopping Streets"

It is recommended that the following statement be added to Section 3A.1 of the Plan setting out the measures the City will undertake in traditional shopping streets to encourage their retention as active and economically viable shopping districts:

3A.1(1) It is the policy of Council to use its powers of regulation and review and other measures in areas recognized as traditional shopping streets to improve the attractiveness and convenience of their shopping environments and to assist their business functions. These measures may include, but are not limited to:

a) encouraging a form of development that supports traditional shopping street's environment and shopping functions and is compatible with neighbouring buildings through measures which may include passing Site Plan Control By-laws;

b) giving priority to traditional shopping streets when improving public amenities such as parking facilities, street furniture and landscaping.

c) giving preference to sites in traditional shopping streets when locating public services and facilities supportive of shopping activity;

d) having regard for traditional shopping streets when considering municipal issues, policies, or proposals affecting these areas;

e) encouraging the location of street-related retail and services uses in traditional shopping streets; and

f) encouraging and assisting the organization and functioning of effective associations of businesses in traditional shopping streets.

Many of these policies and activities will be carried out in commercial areas that are not identified as traditional shopping streets as well. In particular, improving the physical appearance of commercial strips and encouraging the organization of business associations are general objectives across the City. However, priority is to be given to traditional shopping streets when making decisions about how to distribute public funds between areas and where to concentrate staff resources.

3.4 Policies Towards New Retail Development

Economic Policies for Retail Strips proposed that the location, scale and physical form of new retail development should support retail activity in traditional shopping streets. New projects should not produce more retail space in an area than its market can support. They should locate within traditional shopping streets when possible. Their physical form should encourage pedestrians to use the public sidewalk and visit neighbouring businesses, and generally improve the shopping street's environment. Retail developments located outside of traditional shopping streets ideally should serve only convenience shopping functions, be ancillary to another activity, or provide a type of shopping function not offered in or not compatible with traditional shopping streets.

It is recommended that a statement be added to Section 3.1 of the Official Plan to establish the policy of encouraging new retail developments to support traditional shopping streets. The statement should read substantially as follows:

3.1(g) It is the policy of Council to ensure that the location, scale and form of new development support retail activity in traditional shopping streets in accordance with Sections 3A.1(k) and 3A.1(l) of this Plan, and are compatible with the surrounding area. Accordingly, Council may pass By-laws to:

i) encourage the location of predominantly non-retail development in certain appropriate Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas not recognized as traditional shopping streets;

ii) limit the amount of non-residential gross floor area used for retail purposes on a lot in all areas where this Plan permits retail uses other

than are delineated on Map 11 of this Plan to a maximum of 1 800 square metres more than existed on the lot on the date of passing such a By-law. (For the purposes of this Plan, any parcel of land which abuts the lot shall be included when calculating the 1 800 square metre maximum if the owner or owners of the lot owns a legal or equitable interest in the parcel, is the beneficiary of a trust in respect of the parcel, or owns or is the beneficiary of a trust of shares in the capital stock of a corporation which owns a legal or equitable interest in the parcel or for the benefit of which such an interest is held.) Upon application by the owner of the lot, Council may pass by-laws to permit the use of additional non-residential gross floor area for retail purposes provided that: (i) the proposed development is compatible with the surrounding area and consistent with all other policies of this Plan; and (ii) Council is satisfied that the proposed development will not adversely affect the economic activity of any traditional shopping street.

Section 3.1(g)(i) establishes the policy of rezoning blocks of commercial frontage that have little existing retail activity or potential for expansion to encourage the development of other types of uses. The "non-retail" areas and the zoning strategy appropriate in each are to be identified through local study. One of the following three approaches probably will be appropriate in most cases:

1. A zoning category such as to the C1.A designation could be used to permit most types of residential, office and institutional uses while excluding retail and service uses except for restaurants, banks and real estate sales offices.

2. The density designations could be adjusted to encourage residential development and limit the amount of commercial or institutional floor space. For example, residential projects in non-retail areas could be allowed the same density as mixed

use projects, and the non-residential floor space could be limited to a low density such as 0.5 times the area of the lot.

3. Commercial areas could be rezoned to a residential zoning category such as R.4. This would permit a few limited types of offices and institutional uses in addition to residences.

It is anticipated that residential development will be encouraged in most "non-retail" areas. Exceptions may be made in or near industrial areas where zoning strategies to encourage a mixture of industrial-commercial or industrial-residential development may be considered more appropriate.

Section 3.1(g)(ii) will require developers wishing to build large amounts of retail space in most areas of the City to apply for rezonings. A rezoning would be favourably considered if Council is satisfied that the project is consistent with the Plan and compatible with the surrounding area, and that it is unlikely to substantially detract from any traditional shopping street's economic activity. The details of the recommended policy are summarized below:

- projects will require rezonings if they add 1 800 square metres (19,375 sq. ft.) or more retail space to the amount of space that existed on the site on the date the by-law is passed by Council. Any existing development may build a minor addition of less than 1 800 square metres without applying for a rezoning if not prohibited by other provisions of the By-law. Existing blocks of stores in a retail strip can be redeveloped without a rezoning provided that the new project increases the amount of retail space in the area by less than 1 800 square metres;

- neighbouring properties owned by the same person or group will be included as part of the lot when the 1 800 square metre limit is calculated. This will eliminate the possibility of avoiding the rezoning process by building a number of smaller additions on adjacent properties.

- the uses considered to be "retail" are listed in Section 4.1 of this report. They include restaurants and taverns, personal service shops, and many places of amusement as well as retail stores.

- Map 11 indicates the areas of the City to be exempted from the limit on new retail floor space. These are the Central Core, Chinatown West, the Railway Lands, Harbourfront, and the Exhibition District.

This is a larger area than was proposed for exemption in my previous reports. The Waterfront area was added to the Central Core and Chinatown West because retail projects in these areas have similar characteristics that minimize their impact on retail strips. Often they are associated with high density development, and can be supported by the new residents, employees, and tourists. Where this is not the case, the stores and service shops usually serve highly specialized, region-wide markets.

The proposed larger project's likely economic effect on traditional shopping streets will be evaluated by requiring the applicant to submit a market study. The Commissioner of Planning and Development will review the study, and advise Council whether he is satisfied that the proposal is unlikely to substantially detract from economic activity in any traditional shopping street.

A pamphlet guiding prospective developers in preparing the required studies will be written. It will be based on the guidelines described in my report of September 8, 1983, and reproduced in Appendix B.

4. Zoning By-law Amendment

The as-of-right permission of large retail developments must be deleted from the Zoning By-law if the City is to review them to ensure that they support retail activity in traditional shopping streets. It is recommended that appropriate provisions be added to the By-law restricting retail and service uses to not more than 1 800 square metres greater than the amount that existed on the lot on the date the By-law is approved by Council unless the project is located within the exempt areas (Central Core, Chinatown West and the Waterfront area) which will be illustrated on a Map.

The 1 800 square metre limit on floor space used for new retail stores and service shops will apply in all districts that permit these uses, i.e. in C.1, C.1S, C.2, C.3, C.4, CR, I, I2 and I3 districts.

The uses included in the 1 800 square metre limit will be those included in Sections 12A(13)(b)(iii) and (iv), as listed below.

LOCAL RETAIL AND SERVICE SHOPS

- a grocery shop, a bake-shop, a butcher shop, a delicatessen; a pharmacy, a variety or smoke shop, a newstand, a hardware shop; a place of business of a bank, trust company, savings and loan company, or credit union which provides

service to the public; an eating establishment, a box lunch shop, a tavern or public house; a shoe repair shop, a shoe shine shop, a tailor's shop, a dry cleaning shop, a dry cleaner's distributing station, a laundry shop; a barber shop, a ladies hairdressing establishment; a book store, a florist shop.

GENERAL RETAIL AND SERVICE SHOPS

- a retail store, a pawnbroker's shop, a secondhand shop, a dressmaker's shop, a pet shop, a real estate sales office; a sample or showroom, an auctioneer's premises; a service and repair shop, a locksmith's or gunsmith's shop, a taxidermist's shop, an upholsterer's shop, a spotting and stain removing establishment, a duplicating shop.

Recommendations:

1. That the City Solicitor, in consultation with the Commissioner of Planning and Development, be requested to submit a draft by-law to amend the Official Plan by adding the following sections, substantially as follows:

3A.1(k) It is the policy of Council to recognize specific Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas as traditional shopping streets through statements in Part II of this Plan or through other statements of policy. It is the objective of Council that traditional shopping streets be retained as active and economically viable shopping districts. Accordingly, Council will give priority to these districts in determining specific economic and other measures intended to revitalize commercial areas.

3A.1(l) It is the policy of Council to use its powers of regulation and review and other measures in areas recognized as traditional shopping streets to improve the attractiveness and convenience of their shopping environments and to assist

their business functions. These measures may include, but are not limited to:

a) encouraging a form of development that supports traditional shopping streets' environment and shopping functions and is compatible with neighbouring buildings through measures which may include passing Site Plan Control By-laws;

b) giving priority to traditional shopping streets when improving public amenities such as parking facilities, street furniture and landscaping;

c) giving preference to sites in traditional shopping streets when locating public services and facilities supportive of shopping activity;

d) having regard for impacts on traditional shopping streets when considering municipal issues, policies, or proposals affecting these areas;

e) encouraging the location of street-related retail and services uses in traditional shopping streets; and

f) encouraging and assisting the organization and functioning of effective associations of businesses in traditional shopping streets.

3.1(g) It is the policy of Council to ensure that the location, scale and form of new development support retail activity in traditional shopping streets in accordance with Sections 3A.1(k) and 3A.1(l) of this Plan, and are compatible with the surrounding area. Accordingly, Council may pass by-laws to:

i) encourage the location of predominantly non-retail development in certain appropriate Mixed

Commercial-Residential Areas not recognized as traditional shopping streets; and

ii) limit the amount of non-residential gross floor area used for retail purposes on a lot in all areas where this Plan permits retail uses other than are delineated on Map 11 of this Plan to a maximum of 1 800 square metres more than existed on the lot on the date of passing such a By-law. (For the purposes of this Plan, any parcel of land which abuts the lot shall be included when calculating the 1 800 square metre maximum if the owner or owners of the lot owns a legal or equitable interest in the parcel, is the beneficiary of a trust in respect of the parcel, or owns or is the beneficiary of a trust of shares in the capital stock of a corporation which owns a legal or equitable interest in the parcel or for the benefit of which such an interest is held.) Upon application by the owner of the lot, Council may pass by-laws to permit the use of additional non-residential gross floor area for retail purposes provided that: (i) the proposed development is compatible with the surrounding area and consistent with all other policies of this Plan; and, (ii) Council is satisfied that the proposed development will not adversely affect the economic activity of any traditional shopping street.

10.42 The term traditional shopping streets means those Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas that Council has identified as active and economically viable shopping streets in accordance with Section 3A.1(k) of this Plan.

2. That the City Solicitor, in consultation with the Commissioner of Planning and Development and the Commissioner of Buildings

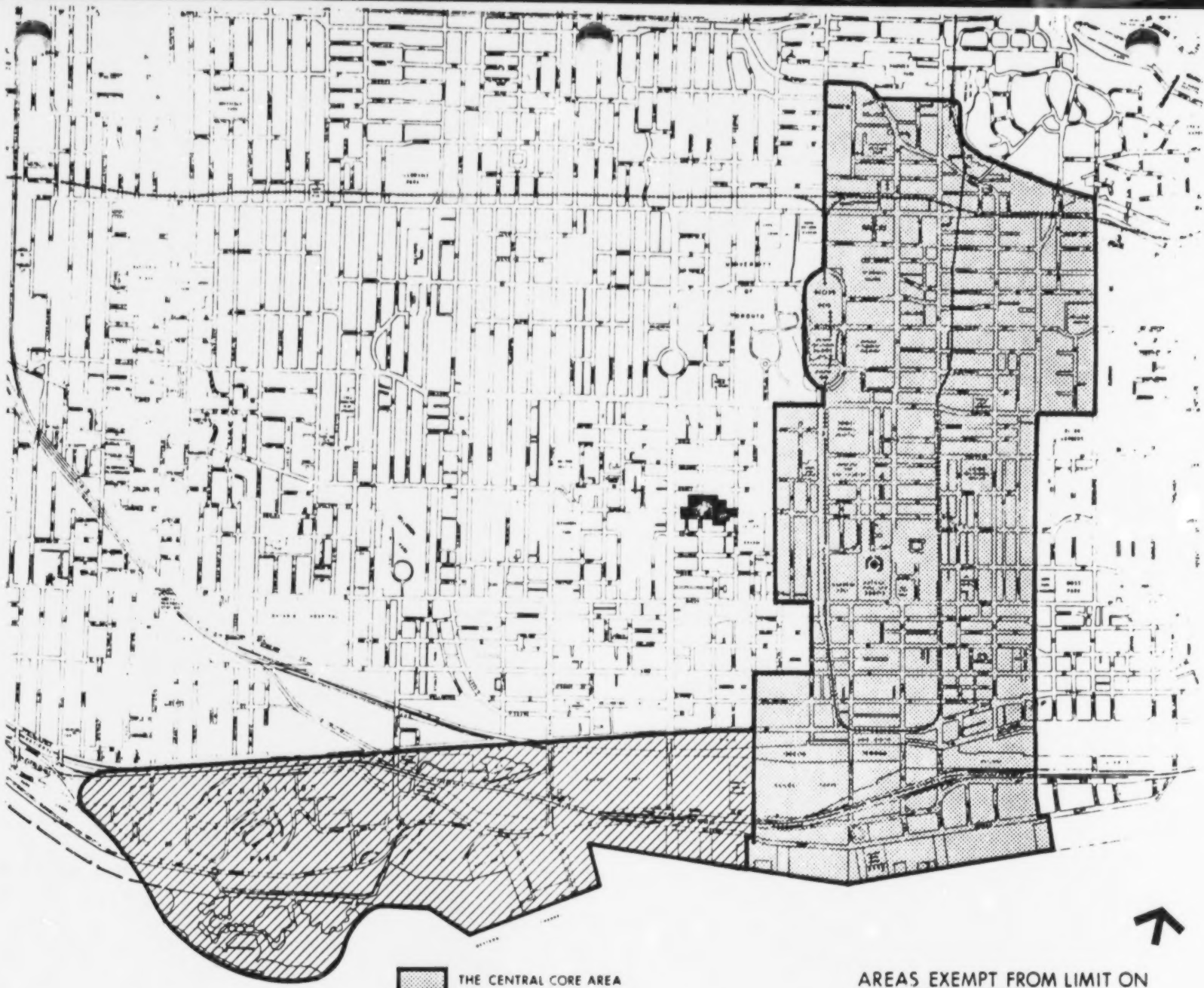
and Inspections be requested to submit a draft by-law to add a new paragraph to the Zoning By-law prohibiting the erection or use of a building in C, CR and I district containing more than 1 800 square metres of floor space for retail and service uses as listed in Section 12A(i)(b)(iii) and (iv) in addition to such floor area existing on the lot at the date of the passing of the by-law unless the project is located within the Central Core, Chinatown West or Waterfront area as shown on Map 11, attached to this report.

3. That the Commissioner of Planning and Development be requested to report on the appropriate identification of traditional shopping streets.

4. That this report be forwarded to the Planning Advisory Committee for information.

Stephen G. McLaughlin,
Commissioner.

JM/fs



AREAS EXEMPT FROM LIMIT ON NEW RETAIL SPACE

REF. No. 332/06085 REDUCED DRAWING

CITY OF TORONTO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STEPHEN G. McLAUGHLIN, COMMISSIONER

POLICY SECTION JUNE, 1984

APPENDIX A

(Letter from Westclair Business and Professional Association, 1266 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, Ontario, dated October 14, 1983, re Economic Policies for Retail Strips)

You and your staff have done an excellent job in summarizing the public comments relative to Economic Policies for Retail Strips. Thank you for sending your report along, and for soliciting further comments.

On the basis of the views expressed, and recommendations made by your department, and members of the public, we understand that the future of traditional shopping streets is now a matter of policy receiving City Council's approval, and not just in principle.

We in Westclair Village, a thriving retail strip along St. Clair Avenue West, between Westmount and Lansdowne, are concerned about the early implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. The report makes us aware that the revitalization and appreciation of retail strips like ours depend not on unlimited budgets, but on the quality of our programs, and on the cooperative approach to problem solving on the part of merchants and business associations, and business associations and city administration.

In Westclair Village we realize that, as the report suggests, there are things that the City can and should do, and there are things that merchants and business organizations must also do in order for the proposals to come to fruition. We therefore stand solid and united in endorsing the principle that Council should:

1. Embark on a project to beautify streetscapes, and improve the adequacy of municipal parking.

2. Limit the size of commercial development in areas located near traditional shopping streets.

We also stand solid and united in endorsing the principle of efficient, and well run business associations. They represent the vehicle through which members of the local business community can define their goals, reach consensus, and articulate their needs.

A business association that is well run is conscious of the potential of the area it represents, and has clear ideas in terms of attracting more shoppers. Moreover, it can sensitize itself to responding with imaginative ideas to the expectation that both merchants and shoppers/residents may have about improvements to

the common elements. Westclair Village, obviously, is being guided by one such business association. Its twenty member strong Board of Directors meets once a month to discuss local affairs. The members of the Board are a devoted and hard working group representative of the business community at large: merchants, bankers, professionals. Four of the directors are women. The Village itself does not match the fervor and dedication of its association: it surpasses it!

Westclair Village is a people place renowned for the quality merchandise sold in its stores, and for the quality services offered by its professionals. The numerous Toronto class restaurants, coffee shops, boutiques combine with the lively outdoor atmosphere to make this retail strip an in place for shoppers and residents alike. The intensity of store front renovations, and structural improvements to building reflect the merchants' commitment to this area and its continued stability. It would appear that Westclair Village is therefore a prime candidate for identification and designation as a Traditional Shopping Street.

Realizing, moreover, that the achievement of our goals, mutually desirable from both the City's and the local merchants' point of view, depend on both City and Business Associations working together in harmony, and cooperatively, we would further recommend that the City appoint a qualified official to act as representative for the various business associations. Such an official, familiar with the internal policies of the various City departments with which business associations would most often deal with, would act as a consultant and advisor to the business associations, with the mandate to cut through the pomposity of the administrative process.

Another function would be that of mediating between business associations and city officials, as well as interpreting each other's position, concerns and understanding.

The dialogue between City and Business Associations is indeed desirable; its continuation may add a new dimension to Torontonians' perception of their City: a world class city, no doubt, not just for its downtown core, and hundreds of other landmarks, but also for the many Westclair Villages gracing its neighbourhoods.

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR MAJOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

A project adding more than 1 800 square metres of retail space would be entitled to rezoning within the framework of the proposed policy if the applicant submits a market study that demonstrates to Council's satisfaction that it is unlikely to detract substantially from the economic activity in any traditional shopping street and is compatible with the surrounding area. The following guidelines outline the information that should be included in the market study, and the criteria that will be considered in evaluating development proposals.

Contents of Market Study

1) Physical Description of Project

- site location
- lot area
- gross floor area of project by major land use
- detailed floor space breakdown of retail component (gross leasable area in food, department store type merchandise, personal services, restaurants, etc.; major tenants)
- previous use of site; retail gross floor area on the lot as of the date the by-law amendment limiting retail space was approved by Council
- parking and loading spaces

2) Physical Design of the Project

- location and appearance of buildings on site
- layout of retail component
- parking and loading spaces; vehicular access and egress

3) Relationship of Project to Neighbourhood

- uses of nearby lots
- surrounding road and public transit system, and traffic conditions

- probable impact of the proposal on surrounding area and transportation system

4) Market for Retail Space

- estimated sources of sales to support retail space. Evidence and assumptions must be documented. In most cases, an analysis of the trade area, the total market potential, and the share of the market the project is expected to attract would be required.

- impact of proposal on existing shopping districts; amount of sales that is estimated to be captured away from existing shopping districts; implications for such districts of losing that business.

ii) Evaluation Criteria

The most desirable retail projects will meet the following criteria:

1. The project is located within or sufficiently close to a traditional shopping street that the customers attracted will also be able to visit the shopping street. The design of the project will encourage interaction with the existing shopping district and will contribute to the attractiveness of its pedestrian environment. The type of retail facilities will supplement and complement those available in the existing shopping district.

2. There is, or soon will be, sufficient demand for the retail facilities to support them without adversely affecting the viability of other city shopping districts, particularly traditional shopping streets.

3. The project is physically and functionally compatible with the surrounding area, and is consistent with Council's policies for the area. It can be accommodated by the existing or planned transportation system, and provides sufficient parking and loading spaces.

Projects which do not meet criterion (1), locating near traditional shopping streets, usually will not contribute to the policy of ensuring that new development supports retail activity in these areas. Nevertheless, they may still be approved provided that it is demonstrated that they will not adversely affect any traditional shopping street and are compatible with the surrounding area per criteria (2) and (3).